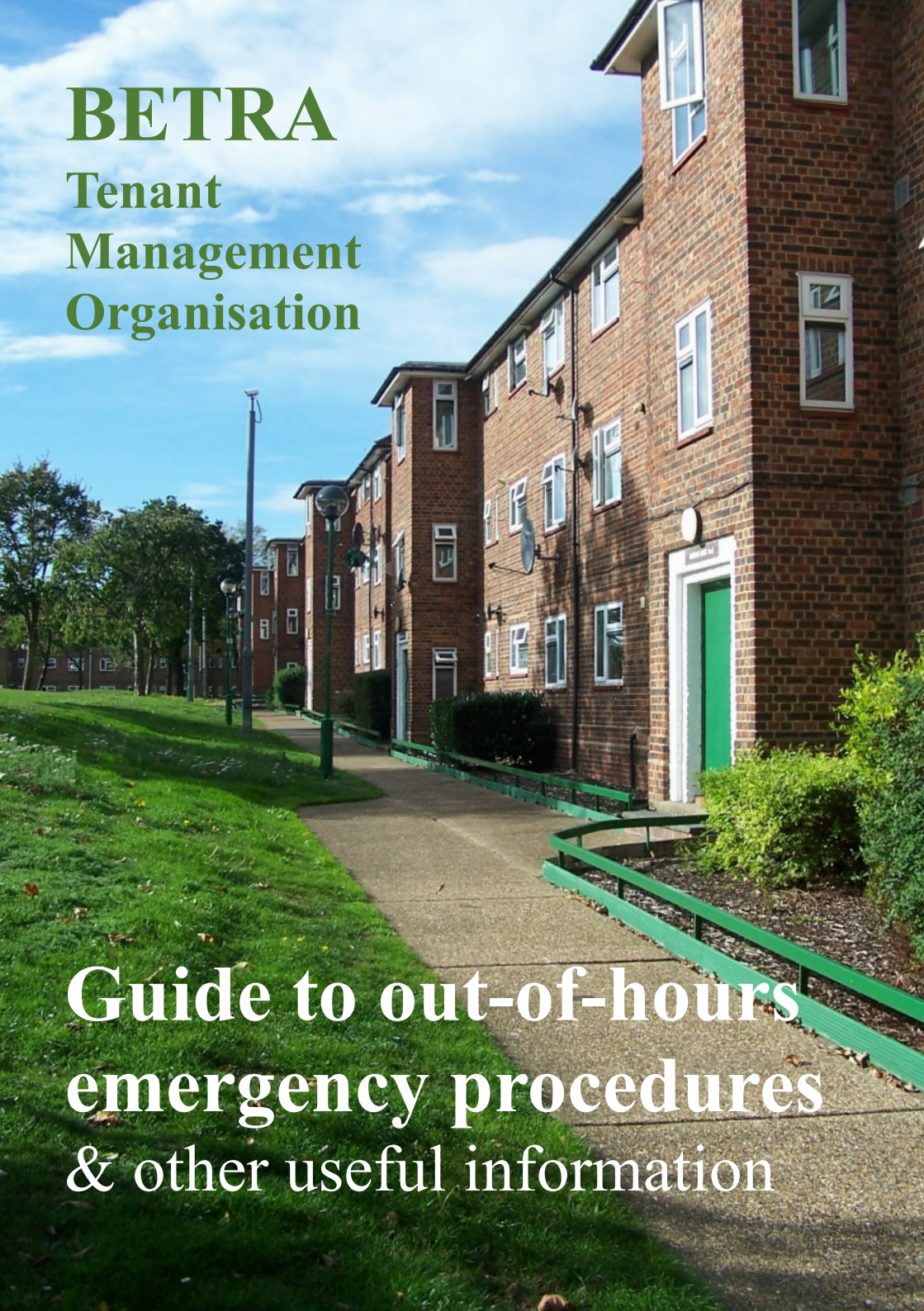
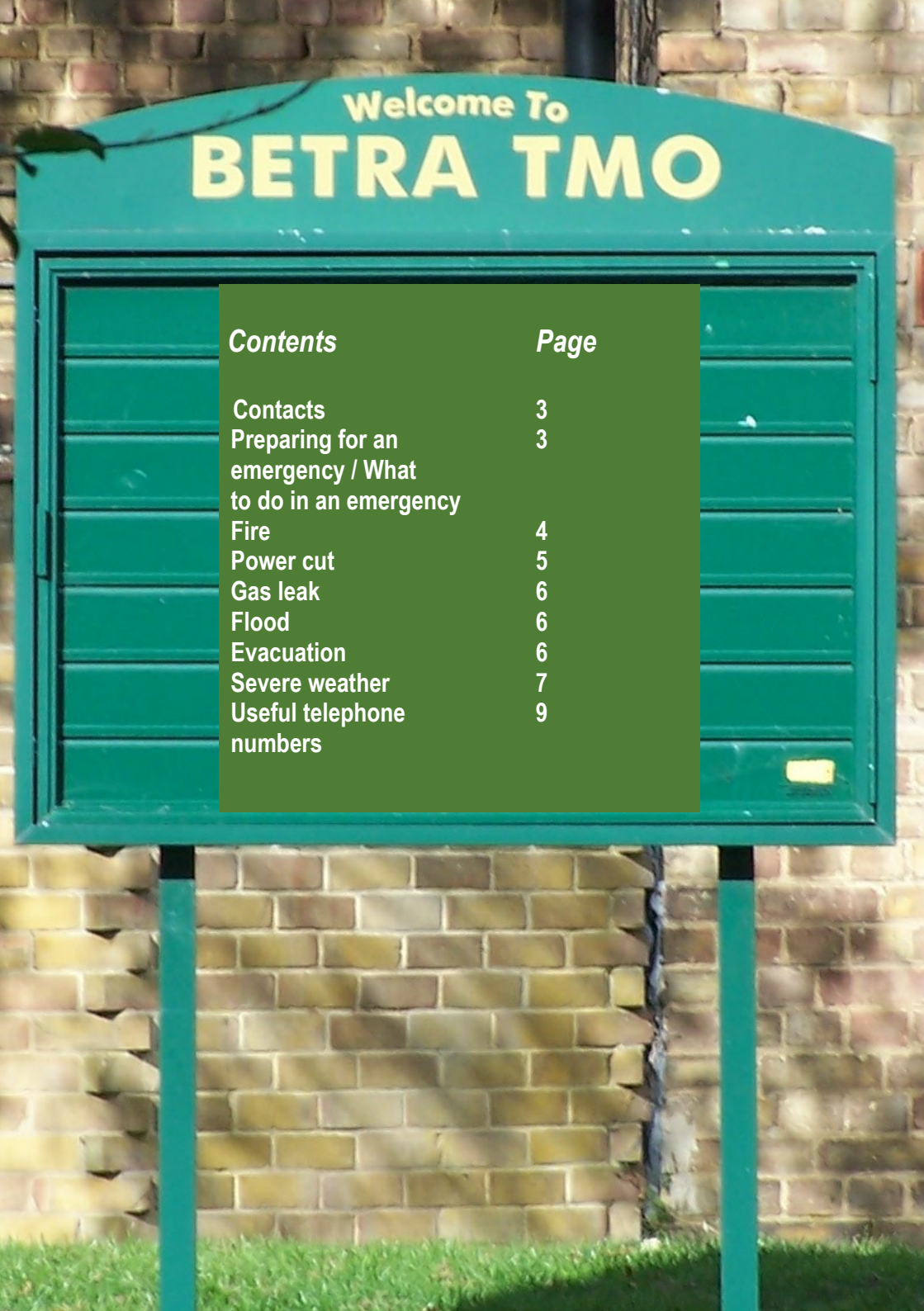


BETRA

Tenant Management Organisation

Guide to out-of-hours emergency procedures

& other useful information



Contents *Page*

Contacts	3
Preparing for an emergency / What to do in an emergency	3
Fire	4
Power cut	5
Gas leak	6
Flood	6
Evacuation	6
Severe weather	7
Useful telephone numbers	9

Introduction

This guide is meant to advise and prepare residents of what actions to take in the event of an emergency, and to give common sense guidelines for how to deal with a number of issues which could happen outside of BETRA's normal office hours. It should be pointed out that exceptional emergencies are rare, and that these guidelines are not a set of hard and fast rules as every emergency has its own quirks. Where possible we have followed guidelines set by the London Borough of Havering's Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Unit.

Contacts

The BETRA TMO Office (01708 344300) operates between 09.00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday.

For emergency repairs only, call Havering's out of hours emergency line on 01708 756699.

Please ensure that the BETRA Office has an up-to-date contact number so that we can reach you in the event of an emergency.

Preparing for an emergency

We never know when an emergency will occur so it pays to be prepared.

- Make sure you know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water supplies
- Find out if any elderly or vulnerable neighbours would need your help
- Think about what arrangements you will need to make for your pets.

Keep an emergency grab pack ready and stored where you can reach it easily (fumbling around in the dark during a power cut can be dangerous!). Make sure all members of the household know where the pack is kept. (See below for suggested contents.)

Suggested contents for emergency grab pack:

- A torch – and remember to check regularly that batteries are working and keep spare new batteries in the pack. (Wind up torches are a good idea for emergencies as you don't have to worry about batteries.)
- Candles – but remember, if you have candles in your pack you will need matches to light them. Also, if you or a family member suffer with respiratory problems prolonged use of candles will aggravate the symptoms.
- First aid kit, including any necessary daily medication, or a list of medication and doses so that supplies can be found for you.
- List of important contact numbers.
- Copies of important documents (birth certificates, passports, insurance documents etc).

What to do in an emergency

If you find yourself involved in an emergency, you will tend to act on your instincts and use your common sense. However, you should:

- Make sure the emergency services on 999 (in the case of fire), the gas emergency service on 0800 111999, or the power company on 0800 0404090 have been called – don't assume someone else has done this.
- Ensure you do not put yourself or others in danger.
- Try to remain calm.
- Follow the advice of the emergency services or Council officers.

Fire

Fire is one of the biggest risks in your home. Contact the Fire Brigade for further information on fire safety in your home. The following useful tips will help keep you and your family safe:

- Have smoke alarms fitted – check batteries regularly.
- Reduce hazards that may cause a fire in your home – for example storage of newspapers or flammable items.
- Check your escape routes and make sure they are kept free of obstruction.

In case of fire:

- Call the Fire Brigade on 999
- Evacuate the flat. Leave the door unlocked to allow the Fire Brigade access to deal with the fire.
- If there is a lot of smoke, crawl along the floor – the air is clearer at that level.
- If the door feels hot, (feel with the back of hand) do not open it, as it probably means there is a fire on the other side.
- Cover your nose and mouth and any exposed skin.
- If you cannot get out stay together in one room near an open window to alert rescuers. Push a blanket or something similar along the bottom of the door to help keep smoke out.

Remember:

We are advised that if the fire is not in your flat the Fire Brigade will evacuate those they consider at risk. Otherwise, you should be safe to remain in your flat until the fire has been dealt with.

- If you experience smoke penetration to your flat you should close the extractor vents in your toilet and bathroom.
- If you are asked to evacuate your flat by the Fire Brigade, please ensure everything is turned off and shut and lock the door behind you.

Power cut

- Contact the power company (National Electricity 24 hour control 0800 0404090) to find out how long you power is likely to be out.

Remember:

- It is better to use torches if possible as candles are a fire hazard and also use up oxygen in the enclosed area which is problematic for people with breathing problems.
- Avoid opening fridges if possible as they will keep food fresh for up to 20 hours if left alone.
- Never open deep freezers until electricity is restored, cover with newspapers or blankets for extra insulation. If food thaws out do

not refreeze – use straight away, if insured contact your insurance company, or dispose of it.

- Turn off all major appliances, particularly electric fires and cookers until power is restored.
- Check on vulnerable/elderly neighbours.

Gas leak

If you smell gas:

- Check all of your gas appliances (eg cooker) are turned off.
- Open windows to vent the flat.
- Phone the gas company (National Grid 0800 111999).
- Do not use a lighter or matches.
- Do not use light switches.
- The gas company should respond quickly to the call and will tell you what the problem is and how and when it can be remedied.

Flood

Here at BETRA, this is most likely to be internal water penetration from flats above you.

- Contact the out of hours Havering service on 01708 756699 advising them of the problems you are experiencing.
- The out of hours operative will then investigate and hopefully resolve your problem.

Evacuation

An evacuation may occur for a number of reasons, for example a gas leak, flooding or chemical incident. Depending on the type of incident you may be able to return to your property after a few hours, but you may have to wait longer.

If the emergency is serious enough to warrant evacuation you will not have a great deal of time to gather things you may need together. It would be a good idea to have a list of essential items that you would need and know where you could put your hands on them quickly.

In the event of being evacuated, remember to:

- Collect the items you will need, including medication and any special foods you may require.
- Make sure you turn off gas, water and electricity at the mains.
- Secure your property.
- Make your way to the nearest car park to you.
- Stay out – Do not re-enter the building until advised you can do so by the Safety Representative/Officer.

Assembly points:
Accrington, Kirkham, Radstock, Oundle – The car park at Oundle House
Angmering, Ampthill, Thornbury – The car park at Thornbury House
Devizes, Upton, Cardigan – The car park at Cardigan House
Stroud, Alcester, Southsea – The car park at Alcester/Southsea House

Havering Council will co-ordinate any evacuation needed and if you do not have a place you can go to, either a friend or family member, they will arrange for you to be taken to an emergency rest centre. This would normally be either a local school or sports centre.

If you are going to be staying with family or friends you should advise the police or local authority officer when you report to the evacuation point. You will be asked to provide a contact number so that they can reach you to advise and update you of the situation as it develops. This will save someone searching for you if they think you are missing.

Severe weather

Snow and ice

- Don't travel unless your journey is absolutely necessary.
- Allow extra time for your journey.
- Ensure your vehicle is in good working order and carry an emergency pack in your car
- If you have elderly or vulnerable neighbours make sure they are safe and warm.
- If they need shopping or medication and you are unable to help, call the BETRA Office and they will do their best to assist.

Heatwave
In the event of a heatwave, the Department of Health will issue advice through the media to those areas affected.

Many heat disorders occur because of over-exposure to heat or excess physical activity. The elderly, young, sick or overweight are most likely to succumb to the extremes of heat; the following tips will help you to counter the effect of this:

- Stay indoors as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of water at regular intervals, even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Limit the intake of alcohol, as alcohol causes dehydration.
- Dress in loose fitting clothes that cover as much skin as possible.
- Protect your face and head by wearing a suitable hat.
- Never leave children or pets in vehicles.
- Avoid too much sun exposure, but if you are exposed use a high sun protection factor cream.
- Remember that electric fans do not cool the air, they just circulate it.
- Regularly check on family, friends and any vulnerable neighbours.
- Avoid over-exertion or strenuous work during extreme heat.

High winds

- Make sure all items on a balcony are secure, otherwise take them inside as they may cause damage if blown around.
- Secure windows.

Useful phone numbers

In an emergency you may find the following numbers useful:

Emergency services	Call 999
Police (non-urgent)	101
British Telecom	150
National Electric 24hr Control	0800 040 4090
E-on	105
UK Power Networks	0800 029 4285
National Grid – For gas leaks	0800 111 999
London Borough of Havering	
Main switchboard office hours	01708 434343
Housing contact centre	01708 434000
Housing repairs out-of-hours service	01708 756699
NHS advice	111
Queens Hospital	01708 435000

Take a few minutes to complete your personal contact details:

My GP _____

Work _____

School _____

Family _____

Friends _____

Vets _____

Insurance _____

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BETRA

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